United Nations A/55/254

General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 August 2000
English
Original: Arabic/English/French/
Russian

Fifty-fifth session
Item 79 of the provisional agenda*
Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Report of the Secretary-General**

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* A/55/150.
** The present report was prepared on the basis of replies from Member States.

00-59433 (E) 220900

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/59 of 1 December 1999 on the strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, by which, inter alia, it called upon all States of the Mediterranean region that had not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and encouraged all States of the region to favour the necessary conditions for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, by participating, inter alia, in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Assembly also encouraged the Mediterranean countries to strengthen further their cooperation in combating terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, which poses a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region and therefore to the improvement of the current political, economic and social situation. In addition, it invited all States of the region to address, through various forms of cooperation, problems and threats posed to the region, such as terrorism, international crime and illicit arms transfers, as well as illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking, which jeopardize the friendly relations among States, hinder the development of international cooperation and result in the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic basis of pluralistic society. Furthermore, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The present report, therefore, is submitted pursuant to that request and on the basis of information received from Member States.

2. In this connection, a note verbale dated 4 April 2000 was sent to all Member States requesting their views. To date, the following Governments have replied: Algeria, Canada (which responded that it had nothing to report), Jordan, Portugal (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union), Qatar and the Russian Federation, and their responses are reproduced in section II below. Any replies or notifications received subsequently will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

A. Algeria

[Original: French]
[1 August 2000]

3. Algeria fully supports the objectives and activities contemplated by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/59, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region" and adopted by the Assembly on 1 December 1999. Algeria has always cooperated and participated in all projects and initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue, concerted action and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. This attitude is proof of its firm conviction that only a genuine partnership can help to establish an area of stability and security in the Mediterranean region and promote an area of common development and prosperity. It is in this spirit that Algeria has become involved in the process which seeks to establish a framework for renewed partnership.

4. After the Barcelona Conference in November 1995, which laid the foundation for a new relationship between the two sides of the Mediterranean based on partnership and common interests, the mid-term ministerial meeting, held at Palermo, Italy, in June 1998, and the third Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conference, held at Stuttgart, Germany, in April 1999, provided a political stimulus to relations in the Euro-Mediterranean area by giving it a comprehensive, balanced and multidimensional approach based on the necessary balance between the three parts of the Barcelona Declaration. As a result of these two conferences, it has been possible to move ahead in the areas of terrorism and the charter for peace and stability in the Mediterranean region. Accordingly, Algeria has spared no effort in helping to consolidate this process and to protect and strengthen it as a fundamental political achievement.

5. Algeria considers that peace and stability in the Mediterranean region are essential prerequisites to economic and social development. The establishment of confidence-building measures to strengthen peace, security and stability in the Mediterranean region must be based on the implementation of just and lasting solutions to conflicts, respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the

peaceful settlement of disputes and concrete, effective disarmament measures, including, inter alia, the accession of all States of the region to the multilateral agreements banning nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction (such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Convention on Chemical Weapons) and the submission of all their nuclear installations international monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

6. The political and security partnership should be based on the littoral States' shared political will to take up common challenges in a spirit of solidarity through respect for the principles enshrined in international law, especially those of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, the non-use of force or the threat of force and respect for sovereignty. This would help to strengthen democracy, consolidate the rule of law and eliminate new types of threats to peace and security, in particular the scourge of terrorism.

7. Owing to its transnational character, terrorism poses a serious threat to the security and stability of the region, to State institutions and to the rule of law. For this reason, it requires sustained coordination and cooperation of all the Mediterranean countries, which must take all necessary steps to eliminate it.

8. International criminality and, in particular, corruption should also receive particular attention, inasmuch as it seriously impedes all the efforts of States to inaugurate their economic take-off. For that reason, at the sixth Conference of Ministers of the Interior of Western Mediterranean Countries, held at Lisbon, Portugal, on 29 and 30 June 2000, Algeria called for reflection on the adoption of a mechanism for combating large-scale corruption. To that end, Algeria expresses its support for the convening of an international conference on this phenomenon.

9. With regard to economic and financial partnership, Algeria stresses the need to reduce development disparities between the two shores of the Mediterranean and, in this connection, calls for a strengthening of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (MEDAL) financial programme. Algeria also advocates the promotion of foreign direct investment flows and their just and equitable distribution among countries of the region. It considers that direct foreign investment is necessary to enhance the progress made by the partner countries of the Mediterranean region in the areas of macroeconomic consolidation and economic transition. Algeria also calls for a review of the debt issue and debt cancellation and relief, for medium income countries also, and the possibility of debt-equity swaps. Clearly, what is taking place is the establishment of new economic relations and the promotion of a partnership for development. The free-trade area should not be an end in itself but rather a means of achieving the more ambitious objective of creating an area of shared prosperity.

10. With respect to the partnership in social, cultural and human affairs, Algeria considers that there can be no free-trade area, presumably involving the unhampered flow of goods and services, unless the important issue of the movement of persons is taken into consideration. The administrative procedures for issuing visas must be simplified and improved in order to promote movement back and forth across the Mediterranean. In this regard, Algeria welcomes the holding in March 1999 of the first Euro-Mediterranean expert seminar on migration and the movement of persons, particularly as the Ministers for Foreign Affairs reaffirmed the need for follow-up on this important issue at Stuttgart.

11. Algeria is strongly convinced of the importance of the Mediterranean Forum, which provides a useful framework for coordination and dialogue. Owing to its informal nature, this mechanism can make a significant contribution to other regional mechanisms and, in particular, the Barcelona process. It gives member countries an opportunity to consider political and security problems and economic, social and cultural issues in the region.

12. As a result of the latest ministerial meetings, at Palma de Mallorca, Spain, on 6 and 7 April 1998, and La Valletta, Malta, on 3 and 4 March 1999, significant progress has been made in addressing issues related to security and stability in the region. For example, a list of measures to prevent and combat terrorism has been adopted, and it has been decided to hold periodic ad hoc meetings to consider this important issue. With regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability, 11 countries of the Forum, bearing in mind the document submitted by the Presidency of the European Union, have helped to make significant progress towards the development of that instrument.

13. Within this same framework of cooperation and dialogue in the Mediterranean region, which Algeria has always supported, the fifth Conference of Ministers

of the Interior of Western Mediterranean Countries, in which Algeria, France, Italy, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia participated, was held in Algiers on 20 and 24 June 1999. The holding, in June 2000, of the sixth Conference at Lisbon and the important decisions taken at this meeting demonstrate the usefulness and value of this framework for coordination, which is another milestone in the effort to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

B. Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[30 May 2000]

14. Jordan accords the utmost importance to Euro-Mediterranean partnership and stresses the importance of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. It supports General Assembly resolution 54/59 of 1 December 1999, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region" and calls for increased efforts to strengthen cooperation in all fields.

15. The strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region requires the expenditure of international efforts, and, accordingly, we recommend the following:

(a) Progress in the peace process and the removal of the obstacles facing it would have a positive effect on the strengthening of regional security, stability and cooperation, particularly in economic fields. We therefore call for a more active European role in promoting and advancing the peace process.

(b) The concept of security and stability in the Mediterranean region is not based solely on the military dimension but is a comprehensive concept based on the political, economic, social, cultural and human dimensions. For this reason, Jordan has always turned towards constructive dialogue and cooperation and rejected violence and extremism.

(c) Jordan aspires to seeing the Mediterranean basin become a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and enjoying security, stability, economic progress and comprehensive development, so that every individual may enjoy all his human rights.

(d) Jordan recommends the creation of a mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes, including commitment to the endeavour to seek peaceful solutions by parties to a dispute in the region.

C. Portugal*

[Original: English]
[26 June 2000]

16. The member States of the European Union have supported the consensus on General Assembly resolution 54/59 of 1 December 1999 on the strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. The European Union wishes to provide the following common reply on some of the activities realized by the Union aimed at fulfilling the objectives of said resolution.

17. The European Union recalls its previous common replies (documents A/48/514/Add.1, A/49/333, A/50/300, A/51/230), reaffirms the principal points stated in those documents and adds the observations appearing below.

18. Since the Barcelona Declaration, the Euro-Mediterranean process has made a major contribution to the remarkable achievement of establishing, developing and consolidating a global partnership between the European Union and the 12 Mediterranean partners, encompassing the political, economic, financial, cultural, social and human dimensions of their relationship. This progress has been achieved despite the fact that some of the surrounding circumstances were not the most favourable. Even so, we have been able to preserve our will and our capacity to advance, step by step, never losing sight of the fundamental objectives we have sought to achieve. We should look well into the future of cooperation among Mediterranean countries, responding to new international realities and challenges. The Mediterranean region will not be immune to these changes. The European Union believes we should continue to direct our efforts, in the new century, to bringing forward the Mediterranean agenda, in order to affirm the Mediterranean as a region on the world stage and to contribute to the development of our partnership based on a Euro-Mediterranean space more homogeneous and specific. We can see the prospect of change for the better in the situation in the region and

* Submitted on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union.

to affirm it in the global context, but this is something we shall not be able to achieve fully while factors for disintegration or even instability remain.

19. The year 2000 is a promising one, when we are approaching the fifth anniversary of the launching of the Barcelona process. Since the Stuttgart Ministerial Conference, in 1999, we have advanced in the final stages of the conceptual work on a Euro-Mediterranean Charter for peace and stability, with a view to finalizing and approving the draft text by Barcelona IV in November.

20. The ongoing work of the European Union on its common strategy towards the Mediterranean, as a sign of the importance the Union attaches to the Mediterranean region, is also relevant. The Venice European Council established that the two main points on which it will be based are the Barcelona process and the Middle East peace process. Our will is to contribute through this strategy to the global principles and aims of the Barcelona Declaration in a spirit of increased confidence and partnership with our associate members from the south, who are kept informed on this development, and we share the wish they have expressed that this strategy, once approved by the European Union, will provide for wider possibilities of cooperation, enhancing the Euro-Mediterranean partnership as well as the European Union's commitment towards achieving peace and stability in the region. We hope that the strategy will give a stronger positive dimension to our policies in the area, enhancing the European role in different circles of Euro-Mediterranean issues.

21. We are also informing our partners, in the frame of our political dialogue, on the emergent European Union Common Security and Defense Policy, based on the relevant conclusions of the Helsinki Summit. New opportunities are emerging for the Mediterranean area deriving from the relaunching of the Middle East peace process, and hopefully its positive outcome during this year.

22. The European Union also believes the historic first Africa-Europe Summit, under the aegis of the Organization of African Unity and the European Union at the invitation of Egypt and under the co-chairmanship of the two regions, add momentum to the development of the Mediterranean agenda.

23. Finally, the various Mediterranean dialogues in which the European Union or its member States participate with partners from the south (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Western European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Council of Europe, and the Mediterranean Forum, among others, including the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process) have evolved in positive terms and within what we consider should be a positive synergy and complementarity with the Barcelona process.

24. We believe this combination of events offers an exceptional opportunity, which should not be missed, for advancing the common Mediterranean agenda, developing its contents, visibility and projection towards the future, ensuring that the problems of the last century do not blight the opportunities of this one. We hope to achieve a qualitative step forward in the perception and implementation of the Barcelona aims, under the conditions of the competitive and globalized twenty-first century. Advantage must be taken of the evolving positive circumstances to advance, with confidence, towards the achievement of the partnership's objectives. The moment also calls for the establishment and nurturing of a Euro-Mediterranean image, reflecting the evolving Euro-Mediterranean identity and its sense of purpose as a region.

25. Since the European Council's declaration on the Middle East peace process, at its meeting in Berlin on 24 and 25 March 1999, the European Union has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the realization of a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East, based on the United Nations resolutions and the principles and commitments undertaken at the Madrid conference, the Oslo Accords and the more recent Sharm-el-Sheikh Memorandum. We believe that the parties to the peace process are at an important juncture for achieving peace and stability in the region. We have encouraged them to seize the opportunity and resume negotiations on all tracks, and call for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), while providing an increasing role of the European Union in support of the process.

26. Within the Barcelona process, progress has been attained in the discussion on the Charter for Peace and Stability, in the actions undertaken to advance cooperation in the priority sectors for economic cooperation and in addressing the issues of economic transition, promotion of investment and the building up of the free trade area to pursue a more balanced approach to the partnership. Increasing the pace of

development of its cultural, social and human dimensions and strengthening the political dialogue, as had been provided for in Barcelona, seems to be within grasp. We believe that only by fully developing the three chapters of the Barcelona partnership in a coherent and integrated manner can the region be endowed with the instruments to act as such on the international stage.

27. In building a Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone, if we do not want to miss the horizon of 2010, it will be essential to deepen South-South and regional cooperation, as well as quickly concluding and implementing the pending association agreements, developing the human, social and cultural dimensions of the partnership, joining the peoples of the two shores of the Mediterranean in the implementation of this common project and strengthening political dialogue through agreement on the Charter for Peace and Stability.

28. Since Stuttgart, several sectorial Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conferences (such as those on health and water) have taken place and others (on industry) are planned for the near future. The Euro-Mediterranean conference on investment recently held in Lisbon (29 February-1 March 2000) should also be recalled. Other events and projects fill up an ever-increasing agenda, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Observatory for Employment and Vocational Training, as a fundamental tool to sustain economic transition in the Mediterranean countries and to promote appropriate levels of investment, in order to achieve and profit fully from the free trade area by 2010. We expect the new Meda II regulation to bring increased efficiency and transparency to the process and have reaffirmed that the financial package for the period 2000-2006 will reflect the importance the European Union attaches to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the expectations of partner countries.

29. The cultural, social and human dimensions of the Barcelona process will be central to underpin the foundations of an area of peace and stability in the Mediterranean. This requires the full involvement of civil society, young people in particular, in dialogues aiming to erase mistrust and build confidence.

30. As regards the political dimension of the partnership, the European Union believes the advances already achieved in the political dialogue have helped to attain better knowledge and understanding among partners by allowing them to exchange and compare their points of view and to reach common perceptions on the problems of the region. This dialogue has been given impetus by the ongoing discussion on the Charter for Peace and Stability. A consensus is being developed that the Charter should be based on a comprehensive and cooperative approach to security. It should establish, as a priority, an enhanced political dialogue. This dialogue should contribute to building a regional area of stability, through a comprehensive approach, and should support the initiatives undertaken in the interest of peace and stability in the region. The future gradual and evolutionary implementation of the provisions of the Charter, within its framework and with the consensus of the 27, will be part of the gradual emergence of a common security area. This area will require gradual implementation of partnership-building measures, and measures including European Union regional cooperation agreements, to improve good neighbourly relations and assure preventive diplomacy and crisis management. It would also require addressing the security requirements of the partnership and developing joint actions at an appropriate time.

31. We consider that the development and conclusion of this Charter would mark a qualitative step in the process of enhancing the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the implementation of the Barcelona Declaration in a balanced manner. A great deal of substantial common ground already has been achieved. Our hope is that, as foreseen by the Stuttgart ministerial conclusions (Barcelona III), the text of the Charter will be presented to and adopted by the next ministerial meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in November, giving us a strengthened common perspective regarding security and stability in the Mediterranean as well as a pragmatic and evolutive instrument for the development of chapter I of the Barcelona Declaration.

32. As we have previously stated, the Barcelona Declaration included in its declaration of principles the promotion of regional security, by acting, inter alia, in favour of nuclear, chemical and biological non-proliferation through adherence to and compliance with a combination of international and regional non-proliferation regimes and arms control and disarmament agreements, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban

Treaty, and/or regional arrangements such as weapon-free zones, including their verification regimes, as well as fulfilling in good faith their commitments under arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, stating that the parties shall pursue a mutually and effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological and their delivery systems. The parties would, furthermore:

(a) Consider practical steps to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as the excessive accumulation of conventional arms;

(b) Refrain from developing military capacity beyond their legitimate defence requirements, at the same time reaffirming their resolve to achieve the same degree of security and mutual confidence with the lowest possible levels of troops and weaponry, and to adhere to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

33. The European Union is convinced that a greater transparency in military issues will induce stability at the regional level. Worldwide transparency in armaments is an important concept for building confidence and security among States and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is an important and concrete measure in this respect. The European Union member States believe that every effort should be made to secure the widest possible participation in the Register and improve its effectiveness, including "nil" reports, and to provide other relevant information, such as holdings and procurement for national production.

34. The European Union calls once more on countries worldwide and in the Mediterranean region to join efforts to achieve the objective of total elimination of anti-personnel landmines as soon as possible.

35. The European Union also believes that the issue of small arms and light weapons is extremely important and recalls its 1998 Joint Action to combat the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. The European Union attaches great importance to the success of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as to the negotiations on this matter in the context of the Protocol to Combat the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms and in other forums.

36. The European Union regards the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament and is committed to the achievement of its universality, as was recently confirmed at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties. The European Union has supported the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The European Union has emphasized the importance of additional protocols to safeguards agreements with IAEA as an effective measure to prevent nuclear proliferation and foster mutual confidence. In this respect, the European Union encourages the Mediterranean countries to support the signature and ratification of the protocols.

37. The European Union has also urged all States to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, including in particular those listed in Annex 2, whose signature and ratification are necessary for the entry into force of the treaty.

38. The European Union recalls its common position adopted on 17 May 1999 on the progress necessary to a conclusion by the end of 2000 of a legally binding verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention, to which the European Union attaches great significance as one of the main objectives in the area of non-proliferation.

39. The European Union calls on all States of the Mediterranean region that have not done so to adhere to all the legally binding instruments negotiated on a multilateral basis in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, in order to strengthen peace and cooperation in the region.

D. Qatar

[Original: English
[30 May 2000]

40. The Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and, in reference to the latter's note dated 4 April 2000 concerning General Assembly resolution 54/59 of 1 December 1999 on the strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, has the honour to state that Qatar indicated that the

Mediterranean countries have the primary role and responsibility in presenting the views and suggestions in this respect. However, it supports all the necessary means and measures that guarantee the strengthening and promotion of international peace and security in the above-mentioned region.

E. Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]
[12 June 2000]

41. The Russian Federation considers that the need to reduce tension and improve the situation in the Mediterranean, which remains one of the most unstable and explosive regions in the world, is one of the most urgent tasks facing the international community. It shares the view that the risks and challenges of the Mediterranean may become one of the fundamental concerns of the international community in the twenty-first century.

42. The political situation in this part of the world remains complex. The region continues to experience the effects of the strong-arm action by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against one of the States of the Mediterranean, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The permissibility of the use of force to resolve a complex set of inter-ethnic problems demonstrates not only the fragility of the current Euro-Mediterranean security system but also the direct dependence of general stability on the political will and responsibility of individual States or groups of countries. The negative effect on the situation in the region, despite some recent progress, continues to be seen in the failure to settle such long-standing problems as those of the Middle East and Cyprus.

43. The achievement of the goal of transforming the Mediterranean into a zone of peace, stability and prosperity proclaimed in Barcelona in November 1995 is still being held up. Efforts by the members of the Euro-Mediterranean process (EMP) alone are clearly inadequate. The Russian Federation is convinced that EMP will proceed more quickly and more successfully if the States adjoining the Mediterranean basin, which themselves directly experience the effects of Mediterranean factors, are involved in the practical measures taken within its framework. Among those States is the Russian Federation.

44. The strengthening of security in the region and the resolution of its complex problems, many of which transcend national borders, require a broad approach based on a long-term perspective. We have in mind both the preparation of conceptual documents in the sphere of security and the practical implementation of socio-economic development programmes for the region.

45. Especially significant at present is the preparation of a charter of peace and stability in the Mediterranean — a vitally important document which should constitute one of the basic components of the edifice of international security and is now attracting ever-increasing attention in the international community. This work is being carried out, however, exclusively within the framework of EMP, although its documents establish mechanisms for public discussion of the charter by all interested parties.

46. It is necessary at this time, when the preparation of a charter of peace and stability is entering its most important period, for the approaches to its content to be transparent in character. The main thing is that its formulation should be based on universally accepted principles of international law, recognizing the priority of the United Nations in questions of international security, and should take into account the provisions of the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on the Mediterranean and the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference.

47. The Russian Federation considers that the new Mediterranean security edifice should exclude the possibility of interference by any country or group of countries in the affairs of other regional States for peacekeeping purposes under the slogan of "humanitarian intervention".

48. There is also a danger that the institutionalization of ENP may take it in the direction of becoming a kind of "exclusive club", limiting the possibilities of cooperation with non-regional partners. Such an approach would in no way contribute to the objectives of strengthening Mediterranean security.

49. The Russian Federation is convinced that there are real possibilities for the broadening of cooperation around the Mediterranean, in particular with regard to such vitally important questions as combating organized crime in all its manifestations, overcoming the effects of natural or technological disasters, and ensuring the safety of navigation. There are also

possibilities for future cooperation in the Mediterranean with regard to protection of the environment.

50. From this point of view it is necessary to strengthen the constructive role of the United Nations in resolving the political, economic and other problems of the Mediterranean, and bring about a more substantive involvement of the world organization in the regional aspects of cooperation.

51. It is also necessary to heighten the role of the United Nations in furthering the complementarity of economic interests and encouraging the effective cooperation of the Mediterranean countries with adjoining regions, particularly the States of the Black Sea basin. The achievement of a "greater Mediterranean" concept based on a system of wide-ranging cooperation between the States of the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins would substantially broaden the possibilities of transforming the region into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation.

52. An important role in the promotion of economic cooperation between the States of the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins can be played by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

53. The development of cooperation on economic and environmental projects within the framework of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the European Union's "Euromed" programme would open great possibilities.

54. A significant contribution to the strengthening of security in the Mediterranean can be made by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which has accumulated solid experience in the formulation and implementation at the regional level of joint measures by its States parties for the strengthening of security and cooperation in the military and political, economic, humanitarian and other fields. This experience can certainly also be utilized for the resolution of Mediterranean problems, particularly in the light of the attention paid to cooperation with the Mediterranean partners of OSCE in the documents of the Istanbul Summit.

55. It would be useful for the United Nations to promote the idea of convening a conference on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean which, in the view of the Russian Federation, remains topical. Such a forum would make it possible to direct concentrated attention to the problems of the region and indicate specific means for resolving them, using the resources and possibilities of a broad circle of States interested in the crisis-free development of the Mediterranean.